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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on an educational program designed to teach parents about the role of television in their children's lives and to increase use of a family video lending library intended to enhance alertness in students, decrease aggressive behavior, and educate parents. Interviews with professionals and a parent survey indicated that there was a need for parent education about television viewing that might cause aggression and inattention problems in children. The results of the program show that parents increased their knowledge about appropriate television viewing for preschoolers. Behavioral records indicated that aggressive behavior among the children decreased while alertness increased. The lending library was continued through the end of the school year and was accessed by all participating families. In addition, the parent education program is scheduled to become part of the preschool programming for the next school year. Contains 31 references and a bibliography of 21 items. Twelve appendices contain survey forms, parent handouts, and other materials used in the program. (AP)

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Decreasing Aggressive Behavior and Increasing Alertness in Preschoolers through a Family Education Program and Video Lending Library

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by

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Cohort 7F

A Practicum Report Presented to the
Master's Program in Child Care, Youth Care, and Family Support
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master in Science

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

1995

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Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

July 14, 1995

Angela Figueroa
Signature of Student

Abstract

Decreasing aggressive behavior and increasing alertness in preschoolers through a family education program and video lending library. Lewis, Angela G, 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Master's Program for Child Care, Youth Care, and Family Support, Descriptors: Parent Education / Parent Workshops / Media Violence / Preschool Aggression / Preschool Inattention / Home School Relationships / Use of Television / Parent Knowledge / Media Literacy.

Aggression and inattention are just two problems identified in classrooms across America. When children who were already identified as educationally at risk exhibited excessive aggressive behavior and a lack of alertness, possible causes and solutions were sought. Interviews with professionals, a literature search and a parent survey indicated that there was a need for parent education in the area of appropriate TV viewing which was seen as a possible factor in the aggression and inattention problems.

The author developed and implemented an educational program designed to teach parents about the role of television in their children's lives and coordinated that offering with a Family Video Lending Library in an effort to increase alertness in students, decrease aggressive behavior, and educate parents.

The measurements in a pre-post test survey indicated that parents increased their knowledge about appropriate TV viewing for preschoolers. Behavioral records indicated that aggressive behavior among the children decreased while alertness increased.

The Lending Library was continued through the end of the school year and was accessed by all participating families. The parent education program is scheduled to

become part of the preschool programming for the next school year. Pending funding, the program will be offered to all system parents of preschoolers.

Appendices include interviews, sample surveys, calendar plan, library titles, and schedules. Report includes tables summarizing outcomes.

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Chapter One

Introduction and Background

The setting in which this practicum project was developed, implemented, and evaluated was one classroom in a Chapter I, federally funded, preschool education program serving four year olds and their families. The program had been in existence for four years and served a total of thirty-six children determined to be educationally at-risk in three classrooms of twelve students each. There was a waiting list of fifty-one children who also qualified for the program. The program operated as part of the city's public school system and recruited and selected its clients through referrals from social service agencies, pediatricians, health departments, parents, and schools. Each referred child was then tested and those showing the greatest educational deprivation were selected.

The objectives of the program include:

1. To improve children's physical, mental, social, emotional, cognitive, intellectual and communication skills through a developmentally appropriate program for four year olds.
2. To strengthen the parents' capacity for facilitating the overall development of their child; and
3. To promote the family's involvement with the child's development through participation in the activities of the program.

The program operated according to the public school schedule with children attending preschool five days per week for five hours each day. The teacher in each

classroom was also responsible for establishing and maintaining communication with the parents through scheduled home visits. The content, direction, and frequency of visits were determined by the teacher and the parents. While specific demographic information is limited, it would be fair to state that services were being provided to a wide cross-section of the community - from teenage parents to older parents; parents of children with special needs; single parent mothers and fathers; two parent families and stepfamilies; and parents representing various ethnic backgrounds who had varying income levels and educational backgrounds.

In my particular classroom of twelve students, eight were female and four were male. Five of my students had single parents, three had stepparents, two were living with their divorced mothers, and two were living with both parents. Eight children were white, two were black and two were bi-racial. At least one parent in each family was currently working, and in two families the mothers were full-time college students.

The city, with a population of just over 21,000 people, is the economic hub of a largely rural area in the northern Shenandoah Valley. Because of its rural nature, the area has been slow to adopt and accept change. This is doubly true of the disadvantaged population. The result has been that generation after generation of children have entered the educational system and society itself with the same handicaps and prejudices as their parents. In the homes of many high-risk children, a lack of parenting skills and a high rate of drug and alcohol use contribute significantly to family violence, low self-esteem, and limited involvement of parents in providing

educational opportunities for young children. The city's location adjacent to a major interstate highway and its proximity to Washington, D.C. have led to a drug problem more severe than in most small cities in Virginia. Long-term poverty, drug abuse, and the concomitant family dysfunction have led to the establishment of this program for four year olds facing disadvantages in successful academic experiences.

Role in the Setting

The practicum project was undertaken by the coordinator of the program, with the permission of the Assistant Superintendent of the school system. As both Coordinator and teacher I was in the enviable position of not only being able to assess problems which directly affected the children I served, but also was able to devise strategies to implement to alleviate the problems. My other duties included fulfilling a liaison role with other agencies, monitoring home visits, and planning and holding regular team meetings.

Because of limited funding, this project was undertaken in only my classroom with only the families of my students.

Chapter Two

Study of the Problem

As Teacher Coordinator of the aforementioned program, and member of a three teacher team, I had noted an ongoing concern expressed by parents as well as staff about inappropriate behavior nonconducive to learning by the children in our program. **More specifically, based on observations of the children in my classroom and conversations with their parents, I had noted the occurrence of violent or aggressive behavior and a general lack of alertness in students.**

By violent or aggressive behavior, I mean the use of various props as weapons in play, lots of physical exchanges between children, and raised voices and threatening tones between peers. By lack of alertness I am referring to the child's inability to concentrate on what is being done as shown by his/her nodding off, or nearly falling asleep.

In order for the children to improve cognitively and socially, a decrease in aggressive behavior and an increase in alertness was necessary.

Documentation of the Problem

Teachers are finding themselves spending increasing amounts of time attending to students' disruptive behaviors, interpersonal conflicts, and off-task behavior (Beland, 1991). Although we expect young children to be emotional and have some difficulty appreciating others' points of view (Piaget, 1948), the excess stress some children bring to school further impedes their social and cognitive development. A pattern of high-risk behavior has been recognized by Chamberlain and Nader (1971) which includes the

following core elements:

1. a tendency to become involved in poking, pushing, and other annoying social behavior,
2. a tendency to rush into things,
3. negative and defiant behavior, and
4. self-centered verbal responsiveness to others, exemplified by interrupting others, blurting out their thoughts, and talk which is irrelevant to the ongoing conversation.

(Spivack, & Cianci, 1987)

To a certain extent, these behaviors are normal for young children -- but when these behaviors are extreme and persistent, they become cause for concern (Beland, 1991). In recent years, parents, teachers, and mental health professionals have seen an increase in aggressive behavior and have become more concerned about the effect of aggressive stimuli and violent play themes on young children. This concern is based on evidence which suggests that rates of verbal and physical aggression by children may be increased by viewing aggressive or violent acts (either live or enacted), or by having access to toys or games that represent violent or aggressive themes (Sherburne, 1988).

The rise in aggressive behavior has been linked to American "Family Time Famine" (Mattox, 1990). According to data collected by John Robinson of the University of Maryland, parents today spend 40 percent less time with their children than did parents in 1965 (Robinson, 1985, as cited in Mattox, 1990). There is a significant challenge to family life today as parents employ a variety of time management strategies to meet their

financial and familial responsibilities. While aggressive and impulsive children can be found at every socio-economic level, high-risk children are over-represented at lower socio-economic levels (Beland, 1991). It appears that economic stress increases the chances of family violence and may interfere with adult supervision as adults are relying more and more on other people or even the television to take care of or occupy their children while they work.

In the past few years, there has been an escalating number of violent acts committed by youth, increasing numbers of violent models pervading television and movies, a high incidence of family violence and chilling accounts of children and youth who commit violent acts without an evident sense of their devastating effects (Bergen, 1994). Children who have been victimized themselves or have seen the victimization of others may have trouble getting along with others. Their anger makes it difficult for them to control their behavior and increases their risk for resorting to aggressive behavior themselves.

Children's play is said to mirror their lives. If this is generally accepted, and we note an increase in family violence, we will see the results in school. It is not reasonable to expect children to play and learn cooperatively if their primary role models demonstrate hatred, violence, fear, contempt, callousness, dominance and submission. Children cannot learn nonaggressive ways of interacting with others when their only models, including those in the media, use physical force to solve problems (Garbarino et al, 1992).

President George Bush and the fifty state governors announced our national education goals following the 1989 Education Summit Conference at Charlottesville, Virginia. The first goal - "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn" - redefines the issue of readiness. School readiness is far more than academic knowledge and skills. Readiness is based on children's physical health, self-confidence and social competence (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1991). Professional opinion and common sense concur that a child's readiness for school is based on a good physical health, ability to speak and listen, a degree of emotional stability and independence, and social skills. Children's inability to concentrate is diminished when they are tired, hungry, uncomfortable, under stress, or bothered by the behavior of others (Zill, 1990).

Young children may be inherently curious, but they do not control their home environments. Young children count on adults for nourishment, emotional support, conversation, learning materials and sometimes transportation to school. Today's children spend their early years in a wide range of environments (Hofferth & Phillips, 1991) and often, the consequences of exposure to those environments manifest themselves as tiredness or lack of alertness at school.

One of the most common reasons children appear lethargic is simply lack of sleep. Between the ages of two and six, the average child needs ten to twelve hours of sleep each day (Needlman, 1995). But many kids don't get nearly enough. In families where both parents work or a single parent works outside the home, for example, bedtimes often

get pushed back. Family friction can upset children, triggering anxiety or depressions. The symptoms that accompany this stress are often lethargy and sleep difficulties. Improper nutrition is also a common precursor for lethargy. All of these possible causes require family intervention rather than a simple school solution. As Hofferth and Phillips (1991) note, "Nowhere is the importance of family felt more strongly than in the field of early intervention."

Analysis of the Problem

While many factors lead to aggressive behavior and the lack of alertness in children, I identified two possible factors based on conversations with the parents and their children.

As previously mentioned, all twelve children had at least one working parent, and two had mothers who were full-time students. This meant that the majority of my students were left in someone else's care while their parents were working or at school. The fact that the children were in preschool did not negate the caretaker issue, as some of my parents worked second shift. Therefore, the children often went from preschool to a baby-sitter. Because there were no licensed daycares in the area which were open during second shift hours, private baby-sitters, teenagers, or relatives were often called on to watch the children. These situations were usually not quality-based and the children often went virtually unsupervised. These parents were sometimes deeply concerned about the dangers their children were exposed to while they were working, but saw no real alternatives. One mother in my program stated: "I know my kids are out there (on the streets) when I'm at work. I don't have any other way right now to have someone

watch my kids... I hope and pray that I taught them the right way. The Lord knows I have to believe that what I taught them will bring them through it."

Even those children who go home to a parent are not immune to the consequences of our fast-paced world. They go home to exhausted parents who set them in front of the television and count on it to pacify, entertain, and occupy their children. Videotapes have also become a standard replacement for parental attention. When asked, all twelve children in my class reported owning a VCR -- even those who reported that they did not have toothbrushes or books of their own. Based on conversations with the children, and the interviews I conducted (See Appendix A) television and video viewing is frequent and unsupervised, with children making decisions about what to watch and how long to watch. This problem is reflected in much of the current literature. Twenty years of research and more than 3000 scientific studies brought the National Institute of Mental Health (1982) to conclude:

> Television can no longer be considered as a casual part of daily life, as an electronic toy. Research findings have long since destroyed the illusion that television is merely innocuous entertainment. While the learning it provides is mainly incidental rather than direct and formal, it is a significant part of the total acculturation process (NIMH, 1982, Vol. 1, p. 87, as cited in Rubinstien, 1983).

Since its development as a commercial vehicle, families have come to accept television as a valuable member of the family (Liebert & Sprafkin, 1988). Television

viewing is not just an option, but a direct option as evidenced by its normally prominent position in American living rooms, family rooms, and bedrooms. Because the typical American child aged two years to five years watches, on average, close to four hours of television every day (Diamant, 1994) we can say that television viewing is a dominant activity of American childhood. A dominant activity as defined by Watkins (1985) is composed of a set of tasks common to most children in a particular culture. Television viewing is seen not as a passive endeavor, but as a part of the social environment that the child chooses at the expense of other activities. While research on viewing patterns usually reflects individual preferences and behavior, television does have broader implications for families and how they function. T.V. influences consumer behavior, attitudes, creates and reinforces models of social behaviors, and work-leisure relations.

Available research does not conclude unequivocally that television contributes to crime and antisocial behavior, but there is, however, considerable evidence that television does influence what children think about and come to believe in (Liebert & Sprafkin, 1988).

Similarly, while it's certainly true that children are exposed to violence in contexts other than television, television provides the most excessive expressions of violence. (Cohen, 1993).

Research consistently identifies three problems associated with heavy viewing of television violence: Children may become less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others; they may become more fearful of the world around them; and they may be more

likely to behave in aggressive or harmful ways toward others (National Institute of Mental Health, 1982; Singer & Singer, 1983; Rapaczynski, Singer, & Singer 1982). Exposure to T.V. violence leads children to believe that violence and aggression are acceptable and normal responses to stress or conflict.

In classrooms across America, mine included, this translates to a topic of great concern to teachers -- the negative effect of viewing violent programs on children's play. The importance of children's imaginative play is well documented (Piaget, 1962, 1963). Research demonstrates that watching violent programs relates to less imaginative play and more imitative play wherein the child simply mimics the aggression observed on television (NIMH, 1982). Children who repeatedly observe aggressive or violent behavior as solutions to problems tend to rehearse what they see in their play and imitate those behaviors in real-life encounters (Huesmann, 1986).

If children are spending four hours a day, or more, in front of the television set after school, they are certainly less likely to devote time to more "hands-on" and "minds-on" activities. Furthermore, in homes where television is not monitored for content, the length of time spent viewing is also rarely limited. Children who have been allowed free reign of the television often stay up later than those with set limits and therefore lose valuable time for other activities including sleep. (Singer, 1983).

I conducted teacher surveys (see Appendix B) in my area, as well as parent surveys (see Appendix C) with the parents I served to further document the specific problems I saw in my classroom.

The teacher telephone survey included teachers in preschool, daycare, and kindergarten classrooms in our city and county. Thirty six teachers responded with 97% agreeing that verbal threats, kicking, biting, hitting, pushing, shoving, and the use of objects as pretend weapons are aggressive behaviors. Other behaviors perceived to be aggressive as listed by teachers included spitting, tripping others, showing approval and encouragement of aggression by others, and throwing objects at others.

Forty two percent responded that verbal threats were occasionally or often difficult. Ninety five percent considered kicking, biting or hitting to be occasionally or often difficult. Pushing and shoving were occasionally or often difficult for 67% of the respondents, while the use of objects as pretend weapons was cited by 50% as an occasionally difficult situation in their classroom.

In my particular classroom, Mondays have generally been more difficult days as far as discipline problems go. While 50% of the teachers noted no pattern, thirty three percent of the teachers I surveyed reported that most of the aggressive incidents in their classrooms happened on Mondays also. Seventeen percent checked the "other" column and went on to explain that they noted an increase in aggressive behaviors after holidays, school breaks, or special events.

Aggression was seen as no problem by 17% of the teachers, a mild problem by 41% of the teachers, a moderate problem by 33% of the teachers, and a severe problem by 9% of the teachers.

Eighty five percent of the students listed by teachers as their most aggressive children have working parents, with sixty percent those working first shift, twenty percent working second shift and twenty percent working third shift. Of those working second and third shift, none used daycare, seventy two percent left children with relatives and twenty eight percent used a baby-sitter. This mirrors the findings within my classroom and reiterates the need for quality supervision for children whose parents work second and third shift when daycare is not available in this area.

Aggressive student's favorite shows were all reported to be adult or aggressive in nature and ranged from "'Beavis and Butthead" to "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers", with "Power Rangers" appearing 80% of the time.

All of the teachers surveyed reported that students portrayed T.V. and movie characters in their play. Again, "Power Rangers" topped the list and were listed by all thirty-six respondents. "Ninja turtles" were listed by 60%, "Jason" by 42%, with "X-men", "Batman", "V.R. Troopers," "Chuckie," "Freddy Kreuger:, and ninjas also being listed.

Education programs for parents was listed by 100% of the respondents as a method that would be of moderate or much help. A free family video library was listed by 66% of the respondents as a method that would be of moderate or much help. Teachers listed "not enough sleep" as the number one perceived reason for inattention.

Parent surveys were consistent in their support of an education program and video lending library. Six respondents listed grossly inadequate sleeping times for their children while those same six reported that their children watched over four hours of television per

day. Parents listed nudity, bad language and adult themes as indicators of shows or movies they would not allow their children to see. Violence was not listed by parents. Their children's responses to that same question echoed their parents' views on bad language and nudity, but movies and shows listed by the children as favorites sometimes included those with adult themes, vulgar language, nudity and a great deal of violence. Parents often listed children's movies and shows as favorites of their child, but the children responded differently. The feeling after reading the surveys was that parents either lacked real knowledge of what their children were watching or were avoiding the truth and listing what they perceived as the "right answers."

Chapter Three

Goals and Objectives

It has been established that some aggressive behavior is normal but excessive aggression impedes socialization. It has also been established that aggressive behavior in children is often increased through excessive exposure to violence portrayed through media. Children who have free reign of the television may also choose this activity over other healthy and necessary activities, which affects their readiness for school.

Therefore, the problem, was identified as the occurrence of aggressive behavior and a general lack of alertness in students.

Goals and objectives developed to impact the problem logically addressed both the aggression and the lack of alertness.

Goal

The main goal of this practicum was to decrease the documented number of aggressive behavior incidents and increase the alertness of students.

Objectives

Based on the goals statement, objectives can be identified as follows:

(1) To increase parental knowledge among my students' parents concerning appropriate television viewing as shown by pre- & post-implementation survey results.

(2) To reduce aggressive behavior incidents among the students in my classroom as evidenced by pre- & post-implementation behavior records.

(3) To increase periods of alertness in students as shown by pre-& post-implementation behavior records.

Chapter Four

Solution Strategy

Because more and more young children are experiencing broken homes, drug and alcohol abuse within the family, disharmony at home, less time with their parents, and unmonitored television as their primary source of entertainment and values, teachers have found themselves spending more and more time attending to the problems these experiences cause in and for children. As a first priority we say that every child has a right to a healthy school start. The sad truth is that in America today one fourth of all pregnant women receive inadequate prenatal care or none at all (Boyer, 1993). Nearly one out of every six children lives in poverty and more than 12 million children go hungry sometimes every month. About 40,000 babies are prenatally damaged by their mother's alcohol or drug abuse - and we wonder why children are not alert and ready to learn? (Children's Defense Fund, 1992). Basically, there was no literature to be found which addressed the very general lack of alertness problem I identified. So logical deductions on my part, however, led me to link my students' alertness difficulties to their excessive and unmonitored television and video viewing, and therefore to link the alertness and aggression problems together in terms of the solution strategies proposed. Students' outbursts, conflicts, inattention, and off-task behaviors called for new strategies in the classroom as well as in the students' homes.

While there are many ways in which a teacher may have an impact on the behavior in his/her room, one way that consistently appeared in the literature was simply to be sure that the classroom environment is democratic and peaceful and that it offers

children nonviolent ways of resolving conflicts and solving problems. Levin (1994) describes creating the peaceable classroom environment as a dynamic process which depends on the unique needs, interests, abilities, and experiences of the children and the teacher. In each case, however, the effort involves helping children work together to make and abide by decisions about how to act and treat each other. This give and take approach to guiding dialogues between children helps to establish a foundation for the idea that problems can be solved peacefully and responsibly. This approach is a given in any program that is child-centered and is developmentally appropriate.

There has been much research over the past twenty years on the early indicators of violent behavior. These behavioral indicators translate into specific skill deficits including: empathy, impulse control, problem-solving skills, anger management and assertiveness (Spivack & Cianci, 1987). The approach of Beland's Second Step: Violence Prevention Curriculum (1991) is to develop skills in empathy, impulse control and anger management. A number of curricula exist which tend to focus on one or two of the strategies listed. Second Step takes the basics of each and integrates them into the whole program The program was piloted in the Seattle, Washington area during the 1990-1991 school year and the children who participated were the same age as the children in my classroom. Results of the pilot program showed significant enhancement of the children's empathy, problem solving and anger management skills. Implementation of this program is a viable option for the future. Because of it's design, it called for an extended period of time so it was not a suitable option for this practicum project.

Two excellent programs designed to strengthen families surfaced in the literature.

Both had specific anti-violence curricula programs for families. The Early Childhood Family Education, (ECFE), program in Duluth, Minnesota aims to strengthen families by helping parents meet the developmental needs of their children, birth through age 5. Like my program, it is operated through the public schools. It is, however, much more intensive in the areas of parent education and serves parents in drop-in centers , and prisons as well as homes. While the idea is certainly a valid one, we do not have the budget to attempt something so large.

The second program, Wallbridge Caring Communities Program in St. Louis, Missouri, is an effort to recreate a village environment for children and families. Along with their anti-violence agenda, they use their twenty two staff members to provide a full range of services including child-care, Parents as Teachers classes, tutoring, substance-abuse counseling, cultural awareness, and case management all in an effort to start children's school careers positively. Again, while I applaud their successes, my limited budget and staff did not mesh with such large undertakings.

Other approaches dealt directly with teaching children using the medium of television as part of the learning process. Singer, D., and Singer, J. (1983) describe lessons designed to teach children the different types of programs, to understand the difference between reality and fantasy on television, to understand special effects, to learn about commercials, to understand how television influences our ideas and feelings, to understand how violence is presented, and to encourage children to control their viewing habits. Lessons were planned for forty minute segments with associated reading

& writing homework assignments. The target group was 230 middle-class third, fourth, and fifth graders. While the results of the project were encouraging and the experience was well-received, a number of points made the project unrealistic for me to pursue. First, the age and developmental stages of the children in my class dictated the length of every activity. The length of the project and its consumption of time is also problematic in terms of occupying time reserved for meeting the educational needs of my students, since they were all at-risk educationally. The target groups differed not only in age, but socia-economic terms also. The majority of my students would not be considered middle-class, but lower-class. Teachers' attempts to channel their students' television viewing habits into a positive learning experience are to be applauded. Yet, one consideration that appeared to be missing from that project was the parent factor. The importance of the parent-child relationship, with respect to the young child's learning has been well documented by Bronfenbrenner (1975). The parent-teacher relationship he suggests goes far beyond the superficial level to one of active involvement between child and parent, with the parents' recognition and acceptance of themselves as their child's first teacher. Evidence supports the belief that parental involvement has the greatest impact on the child's achievement (Duff, Heinz & Husband, 1978). Recognizing the importance of the parents' role, I only considered those interventions which involved the parents.

Providing the parents with appropriate, consistent guidelines for viewing television that worked in tandem with what we taught at school seemed more productive.

While some projects (Williams & Handford, 1986) studied the advantages to a "no television" world, reality for my students was that television does exist, was not going away, was a major influence in their lives and on their school performance, and therefore constructive ideas for its use had to be employed.

Solution Strategy

The first and most fundamental concept was parental education. The parent directly influences what a child learns and retains in many ways. Results from my students' surveys indicated a high correlation between those students who were inattentive and/or aggressive and their unlimited or unmonitored television viewing. An educational program designed to teach generally acceptable guidelines for viewing television was therefore necessary. The program included the formation of a Family Video Lending Library. The chief purpose of the library was to provide an additional mode for parent-child interaction in the home, as well as parent-teacher, teacher-child interaction in the school.

Implementation followed a three-phase design. The first phase of the project included several important logistical steps. Parents were surveyed to determine their interest in and support for the concept, as well as their willingness to attend an educational program. Baseline data was collected on students' inattention and aggression. The educational program was designed and developed following recommendations of professionals in the field. The second major step was to identify and locate videos which were appropriate for family viewing. Monies for the purchasing had

to be secured through donations as there was no budgetary allowance for such expenditures. Finally, as necessary to any well-organized system, simple, clearly stated policies and procedures needed to be established in the form of a check out and return system.

Phase II includes purchasing videos, organizing and categorizing materials, and beginning the educational program. Following the educational program the materials were made available for loan to families.

Phase III, an evaluation and modification phase, was designed to include the post-implementation surveys for the parents and the children, the records of aggressive behavior incidents, and the student alertness records.

While I was tempted to incorporate the Second Step Violence Prevention Curriculum along with the educational program and lending library, I knew that it would be too much to undertake at one time. I do, however, plan to implement the curriculum in the future.

Anticipated obstacles which may have impeded the progress included the potential for bad weather which affects attendance at the educational program, and lack of adequate financial support for the videos.

Calendar plan for implementation activities

The calendar plan is one that closely followed the three phase design mentioned previously.

Phase I

Week One - Parent surveys were completed, baseline data on inattention and aggression was collected. Meetings with various professionals regarding the content of the educational program were held.

Week Two - The program was designed and scheduled and any facilitators were contacted. Video lists were checked for appropriate titles for purchasing.

Monies were secured for expenditures.

Week Three - Check-out and return policies were established

Phase II

Week Four - Videos were purchased, organized, and categorized. The educational program began.

Weeks Five, Six, Seven and Eight - Videos became available for check-out. The education program continued. Video usage was monitored.

Phase III

Weeks Nine and Ten - Post-implementation surveys for the parents and the children were started.

Records of aggressive behavior incidents and student alertness records were analyzed.

A more detailed calendar plan is found in Appendix D.

Chapter Five

Strategy Employed

The problem, which was described and substantiated in Chapters Three and Four, was the occurrence of violent or aggressive behavior and a general lack of alertness in students in my classroom.

The aspect of this project which was unique was the pairing of an educational program for parents with a video lending library. While the main thrust of the educational program was to increase parental knowledge concerning appropriate television viewing, the hope was that their learning would have a positive impact on their children's behavior and alertness.

This chapter will describe the implementation of the strategy used to address the problems of aggression and lack of alertness. The results of the intervention follow.

Action Taken

The main component in the intervention strategy for this project was a seven week education program for parents of at risk four year olds. It was offered one evening per week for two hours. A detailed description of the course content is provided in Appendix D. A brief overview is included in Table 1.

Because funding for the project was limited, the target group was limited to the parents of the twelve students in my class. Parents were told about the program during regularly scheduled home visits and it was explained that the free video lending library was an option available only to those children whose parents participated in the

educational program. A flyer which briefly described each evenings topic was sent home on the Friday prior to the meeting so an attendance estimate could be gathered. An example is provided in Appendix E.

Sessions were held in our school library with dinner served family-style prior to the actual program. Children were encouraged to attend, with baby-sitting and a family movie being provided for them. The sessions were designed to begin generally and get more specific gradually, incorporating lessons on child development as well as information on television programming. A brief overview is provided in Table I and a detailed discussion follows.

Table 1

Content of Seven Week Parent Program

Week 1	General Overview
	Review of Parent Survey results
	T.V. Knowledge Survey (Appendix F)
Week 2	Parenting Styles/Your Child's Developmental Needs
Week 3	5 Basic things your children should know about T V.
Week 4	Setting stands for violence and other questionable content - T.V.
	Violence Quiz for Parents (Appendix G)
Week 5	How commercials target the child market
Week 6	Making Informed Choices - Local options
Week 7	Wrap-up/Alternative to T.V.
	T.V. Knowledge Survey (Appendix F)

Prior to sessions beginning, baseline data on inattention and aggression in my classroom was collected. Each child was assigned an identifying number and their acts of aggression and periods of inattention during each regular classroom day were monitored and recorded by my assistant. A sample of the recording sheet is included in Appendix H. This data was collected through week nine of the project.

I met with our school psychologist, a representative of the Maryland Campaign for Kids' T.V., and a representative of the Center for Media Education to develop the content of the parent education program. I reviewed recommended video lists and with money donated by local businesses and patrons, I purchased video titles for the lending library. I purchased large, gray video boxes and labeled them with the video title, rating, and running time. The boxes were chosen specifically because they do not resemble any local video store boxes. A list of the video titles, ratings, and running times were also made for distribution to the participants. (Appendix I)

The actual education program began in the fourth week of the projects' implementation and consisted of a two hour session each Tuesday night for seven weeks - through week ten of the implementation.

During the first session, as with each session, we began with a family-style dinner. Food has always been a good incentive in past efforts to bring people out for programs and it was an essential element here also. Contributions and discounts from area restaurants and retailers made this possible.

Children were then taken to a separate room for free play and a family movie. Parents remained in the library for the educational program. This pattern repeated each week.

The first session gave me a chance to share with them the concerns I had concerning aggression and the lack of alertness in their children. I shared the results of the teacher survey with them to illustrate that this is a concern for many. We then moved on to the key concept that media, specifically T.V. and video, cannot be ignored as "mindless entertainment," but must be managed by adults --just as they manage other aspects of their children's lives and nutrition, exercise, opportunities for social, spiritual, and intellectual development. We then took a pretest and introduced ourselves by naming our favorite T.V. shows from when we were young. A video with snippets from shows listed by their children as favorites was then shown. Many parents expressed dismay, surprise or looked uncomfortable when they realized exactly what their children were exposed to through television and video. A group discussion followed with the emphasis on coming back together the next week to begin the work of deciding what they, as parents, can and should do. Attendance at the first session was sixteen adults representing all twelve students.

The second session focused on the preschoolers' developmental needs and how we as parents in a T.V. age use different styles to address them than our parents did. The main idea was to lead parents to see that parents used to be the channel through which children learned about the outside world. They could decide what to tell their children and when to tell it to them. Television has destroyed the system that

segregated adult from child knowledge and separated information into year-by-year slices for children of different ages. Instead, it presents the same information directly to children of all ages, without going through adult filters. T.V. takes our kids across the globe before parents give them permission to cross the street (Meyrowitz, 1985). Children don't necessarily understand everything that they see on television, but they are exposed to many aspects of the adult world that parents might not have decided to tell them about. So television presents a real challenge to parents. While a parent can read a newspaper without sharing it with children in the same room, television is accessible to everyone in that space. And unlike, books, television cannot be flipped through to see what's coming up. We may think we're giving our children a lesson on something in the news and then suddenly something else comes up, with no warning, that we really aren't prepared for our children to see. Children's emotional development, their attention spans, and their capacity for understanding abstract ideas were also discussed. We talked about keeping a viewing diary for our family to raise our own awareness of what was being watched and by whom. I then shared our video lending library with them and a discussion followed concerning the movie rating system and the differentiation between "G" and "PG" ratings and our responsibilities as parents when we bring movies home. Each parent left with a movie checked out from our lending library. Attendance remained consistent with last week.

Session three focused on five basic things your child should know about T.V. We began by reviewing the family viewing diaries they had kept and while some had

not kept them, they were able to discuss the shows they recalled watching. Their small group discussions had to be cut short to move on to the topic at hand, but was a good opportunity for parents to vent their frustrations about not being able to adequately monitor their televisions. The five ideas, from the Center for Media and Values, included:

1) We help create T.V. as we watch it,

2) T.V.'s world is made up,

3) T.V. makers use identifiable techniques,

4) T.V. teaches us that some people and ideas are more important than others,

5) T.V. is in business to make money.

We then discussed each point in small groups and brainstormed ways that we could be smarter T.V. viewers. Attendance was down by two parents whose children had chicken pox.

Session four proved to be the most lively. We began by watching a ten minute segment of the most popular show listed by the most aggressive students as their favorite - "The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers." Parents were asked to note on paper as they watched, 1) violent scenes, and 2) a word or two about their emotional response to the violence. We discussed their notes and then moved on to the next activity which asked them to draw a horizontal line with "troublesome" at one end and "not so troublesome" at the other. Participants were then asked to decide where to place the show and other shows on the spectrum. Friendly debate was encouraged by asking, for example, in which show is violence more troublesome:

-cartoons or cop shows?

-The Three Stooges" or cartoons?

-soap operas or "Rambo"?

-slasher movies or war movies?

Parents had many differing opinions. We then took the Violence Quiz and analyzed the results and the implications for our children. We then spent time clarifying when violence is appropriate by brainstorming suggestions for completing the sentence, " I can tolerate violence on TV when..." Some answers were; "...violence is essential to the plot", "...the long-term consequences of the violence are shown", "...other effective ways of solving conflicts besides violence are seen", "...the violence is not too bloody", or "...the violence is not directed at a living thing." The debate was very lively and we ran over our time by fifteen minutes. Our original core group was present for this session.

The fifth session focused on the commercial aspects of television and the fact that TV is a commercial business. This means that television sells audiences to advertisers.

By treating children like consumers, television exploits an especially gullible audience. As James McNeal points out in his essay, "From Savers to Spenders", children are actually three markets in one:

1) They spend their own money.

2) The influence how their parents spend money.

3) They are a future market for all types of goods and services.

We watched a videotape of several commercials aimed specifically at children and broke into groups to identify the common advertising strategies used. Participants were able to identify several strategies, including:

1) Ideal kids - The kids in commercials are often a little older and more perfect than the target audience.

2)Celebrities - The use of sports celebrities or popular stars to promote products.

3) Life-like settings - All-terrain vehicles maneuver over rocks, dirt, & sand designed to look like real countryside. They don't, however, come with the toy.

4) Heart strings - Commercials with emotional ambiance make you feel good. Some examples included: A.T.& T. Reach out and touch someone, and McDonalds.

5) Sounds good - Music and sound effects add to the product making it seem more life-like or exciting.

6) Amazing toys - Somehow the toys seem to be able to do so much more on T.V.!

A group discussion followed with most of the parents complaining about what toys their children wanted based solely on the commercial.

Session six was the empowerment session which gave parents specific information an guidelines to use as they set rules for their own homes. Suggestions from the Center for Media and Values were shared and discussed, including setting limits,

watching by the show - not by the clock, planning viewing times, trying structured activities while watching, and talking back to the T.V. or using characters or events to springboard a dialogue with your kids later. We only had ten parents on this evening, but felt that the reason for this was the fact that our local Apple Blossom Festival was underway. We took the Post-test anyway.

The final session was a quick review of all we had learned and a sharing of ideas. The local children's librarian was on hand to offer a partial listing of videos available free of charge through the library. (Appendix L). She also shared ideas for other activities as alternatives to T.V. The results of the post-test were discussed, and it was agreed that everyone had learned a great deal about T.V. and its effects on their children.

Results

The results provided will be divided into the same categories as the objectives of the project. Knowledge results will be discussed first in relation to changes in parents knowledge of appropriate television viewing. That will be followed by discussion of results for the reduction of aggressive behavior and then the increase of alertness in students.

Outcomes indicated success for all objectives.

Knowledge

The knowledge objective related to the problem noted in pre-implementation survey results concerning a lack of parental knowledge about appropriate television viewing. The project was designed, in part, to increase the knowledge of the participating parents.

The changes in knowledge were measured by parents responding to s series of ten true or false statements regarding issues affecting preschoolers' T.V. viewing. These are found in Appendix F. Changes in participants' knowledge levels in the area of T.V. viewing are in Table 2.

TABLE 2

PERCENT OF PARENTS WITH CORRECT ANSWERS ON T.V. VIEWING

		Week 1	Week 9
1.	Prime time violent acts	50%	90%
2.	Time spent watching	56%	100%
3.	Kindergartner/5,000 hrs.	50%	100%
4.	Saturday morning violence	19%	100%
5.	Preschoolers' sleep needs	50%	100%
6.	Commercials per year	56%	90%
7.	Children and aggression	87%	100%
8.	T.V. as a tool	62%	100%
9.	"PG" meaning	56%	100%
10.	Fact / Fantasy	44%	100%

Note: Week 1 = 16 parents
Week 9 = 10 parents

All of the T.V. viewing questions in the survey received a higher number of correct answers in the post-test than in the pre-test. Knowledge concerning Saturday morning T.V. violence showed the greatest gain, while parents did seem more aware of the effects of violent programming on their children initially than I anticipated. Interestingly though, having knowledge about the effects of aggressive shows had not influenced parental action to change the viewing habits of their children prior to this intervention.

Aggressive Behavior Reduction

The objective regarding decreasing aggressive behavior was taken directly from the main goal statement. Results were measured by compiling pre and post implementation records of aggressive behavior using the recording sheets (Appendix H). After compiling the results, the acts of verbal aggression and acts of physical aggression in a day were figured and listed in Table 3, as well as the means, with discussion following.

Alertness Increases

The objective regarding increasing alertness was also taken directly from the main goal statement. Results were measured by compiling pre and post implementation records of periods of inattention using the recording sheets (Appendix H). After compiling the results, the means were also figured and listed in Table 3 with discussion following.

TABLE 3

AVERAGE INCIDENCES IN VERBAL AGGRESSION, PHYSICAL AGGRESSION, AND INATTENTION.

	Pre-Intervention			Intervention		
Student	V.A.	P.A.	I.	V.A.	P.A.	I.
1	5	0	0	3	0	0
2	6	6	1	3	1	0
3	0	0	4	0	0	2
4	0	3	0	0	2	0
5	2	0	0	2	2	2
6	1	4	2	1	2	1
7	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	2	3	0	1	1
9	3	3	5	0	3	0
10	0	2	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	4	0	0	4
12	1	1	0	1	1	0
Mean	1.5	1.75	1.58	.83	1.0	.83

Prior to the intervention, six children had consistently been verbally aggressive. During and after the intervention three of those students showed a decrease in the average number of incidents. The other three's patterns did not appear to change. The verbal aggression mean went from 1.5 at pre-intervention to .83 after intervention.

Physical aggression had been a problem for seven children prior to the program. After the program five of those children had a marked decrease in physical aggression. One child who had not been physically aggressive became so although a change in schedule and after school baby-sitting arrangement is the perceived cause in his mothers' view. Two children's physical aggression scores seemed to remain constant. it's interesting to note here that those two student's parents were the only two who continued to insist that their children's interests in "Power Rangers" were okay with them. The physical aggression mean went from 1.75 at pre-intervention to 1.0 after intervention.

In the Inattention columns, there were six children prior to implementation who were exhibiting periods of inattention and a lack of alertness. Five children showed progress in this area while one remained unchanged. The child whose score remained unchanged wakes up at 4:30 a.m. due to their single father's work schedule and she continues to struggle with the interruption of her sleep. The same child who became physically aggressive after a change in schedule and baby-sitters, also began to experience a lack of alertness as noted in our recording sheets. This became an invaluable tool to use in speaking to his parents about looking for other options for him. The inattention mean went from 1.58 at pre-intervention to .83 after intervention.

In conclusion, the average incidences in verbal aggression and physical aggression decreased after intervention. Parental Knowledge regarding appropriate T.V. viewing increased and periods of alertness increased as inattention decreased. All three stated objectives were met successfully.

Chapter Six

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the results met the stated objectives. Parents' knowledge regarding appropriate television viewing increased. The behavior objectives addressing the desire for a decrease in aggressive behavior and an increase in alertness were also met.

Some of the program components which I believe contributed to the positive results were: the use of various techniques in the presentation of the educational program, the availability of child care, the provision of an evening meal for the family on class nights, the parents' familiarity with the presenter, and an atmosphere of congeniality and informality.

In an effort to match various learning styles, the use of differing techniques for disseminating information was employed. Oral and written presentations, large and small group discussions, flip charts, activities, and videos were among the strategies used.

Every attending parent used the child care option which included not only the enrolled child, but siblings as well. According to parental feedback, had this component not been included, attendance would not have been possible for many.

Providing meals proved to be the most difficult detail to implement, but was the single most popular feature cited by participants. With a 6:00 p.m. starting time, making dinner for a family before attending a session would have been impossible for many participants. The generosity of area restaurants and wholesalers was essential for this provision to be included.

Although it was tempting to use an outside presenter, building instead on the parent/teacher relationships already forged proved to be successful. The most critical attribute for a facilitator is belief in the value of parents. The ability to see strengths and respect both effort and differences projects a critical message to participants. The facilitator must also show by actions and demeanor that he/she wants to be there and make it an enjoyable experience. The fact that all parents surveyed expressed a desire for the education program and video lending library also led to their excellent preparation and the general mood of informality and congeniality.

Because of the program's popularity and success this year, there are plans to include it in the coming year's programming. If funds are available it would be ideal to offer the program to all three sites.

A summary of this programs' results will be shared with program staff and administration to increase our chances for funding the project again.

The overall strategies will likely be repeated but with a few changes as needed for meeting the target group's needs. The sessions will be summarized in a leader's manual for program staff to use as a resource. Results from this and future adaptations will be compared to see if subsequent offerings have similar or differing impacts. One suggestion for the future is to change the timing of the offering to early fall rather than spring. The project would likely be at least as popular then before warm weather activities are planned. As it stands, there is no way for families to use the lending library

after school ends in June. Beginning in the fall would then allow families a longer period of time to access the video lending library.

Another consideration is the likelihood that parents with English as a second language will be participating and will need provisions made to allow for their full involvement. Translation of materials and the inclusion of a translator could prove to be necessary.

Overall, the results indicate that the program accomplished what was intended. The time spend coordinating details prior to the program beginning was invaluable and produced results that reflected the effort. Parental feedback indicated that they agreed.

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APPENDIX A

Child Interview

Child Interview

Child's first name:

What do you usually do at home after school?

What do you usually do at the sitter's?

What do you usually do at home after dinner?

What is your favorite movie?

Who decides what to watch?

Are there shows that Mom and Dad don't let you watch?
What are they?

Are there movies that Mom and Dad don't let you watch?
What are they?

When do you go to bed?

When you are playing and you pretend to be someone else, who do you pretend to be?
_____

What's your favorite pretend game?_____

Do you ever get in trouble at school or at the babysitter's? _____
If yes, what for?_____
_____ _____

APPENDIX B

Teacher Telephone Survey

Teacher Telephone Survey

Name:_____

Organization:_____

Role: Preschool ( )
Day Care ( )
Other ( ) _____

Interviewer:

(This survey is part of a practicum project for my graduate school studies.) The purpose of the survey is to gather information to find out if aggression and lack of alertness by children are problems in your center; what factors you attribute the problems to, and what you think could help to alleviate the problems. Naturally, your participation is voluntary.

Do you have a few minutes to talk to me about this?

If yes, continue with the interview.

If no, set an alternate time _____.

If you are not clear about a question, simply ask me to rephrase or further explain it. Do you have any questions?

1. **Do you consider any of the following behaviors aggressive?**
   ( ) verbal threats ( ) pushing, shoving
   ( ) kicking, biting, or hitting ( ) the use of objects as pretend weapons

2. **How often do you see each of the following behaviors? Using the rating scale below, please rate how often you see the following behaviors**

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often
Verbal Threats	1	2	3	4
Kicking, biting or hitting	1	2	3	4
Pushing, shoving	1	2	3	4
The use of objects as pretend weapons	1	2	3	4

3. **What other behaviors do you consider to be aggressive?**

_____

_____

4. **What particular behaviors cause the most disruption or are hardest to handle?**

	Not Difficult	Rarely Difficult	Occasionally Difficult	Often Difficult
Verbal Threats	1	2	3	4
Kicking, biting or hitting	1	2	3	4
Pushing, shoving	1	2	3	4
The use of objects as pretend weapons	1	2	3	4

5. **When do you see most of the aggressive incidents?**

( ) no particular day
( ) usually Mondays
( ) usually Tuesdays
( ) usually Wednesdays
( ) usually Thursdays
( ) usually Fridays
( ) other. Explain_____
_____

6. **On a scale of 1 - 4, please rate the degree of severity of the aggression problem in your classroom**

(Circle one) 1 No Problem 2 Mild Problem 3 Moderate Problem 4 Severe Problem

7. **Think about the two children who seem most aggressive. Do their parents work outside the home?**

Child (1)
yes ( ) no ( )
If yes-
1st shift ( )
2nd shift ( )
3rd shift ( )

If 2nd or 3rd shift, who watches the child?_____
_____

Child's favorite T.V. show
_____

Child (2)
yes ( ) no ( )
If yes-
1st shift ( )
2nd shift ( )
3rd shift ( )

If 2nd or 3rd shift, who watches the child?_____
_____

Child's favorite T.V. show
_____

8. **Are T.V. or movie characters ever portrayed by students in aggressive play?**
yes ( ) no ( )
If yes. state all those below which your students play:
( ) power rangers ( ) Batman ( ) Jason (from Friday the 13th)
( ) ninja turtles ( ) X-men
( ) Others. Please list:_____
_____

9. **To what degree do you think each of the following would impact on the problem of aggression?**

	None	Very Little	Moderate	Very Much
Consistency between the the parents & teachers	1	2	3	4
Aggression/violence prevention curriculum for the students	1	2	3	4
Education program for parents on appropriate television & movie viewing for children	1	2	3	4
Free family video lending library	1	2	3	4

10. **What suggestions do you have for lessening aggressive behavior?** _____
_____

11. **To what extent is lack of alertness among children a problem in your class.**

(Circle one)	1	2	3	4
	No Problem	Mild Problem	Moderate Problem	Severe Problem

12. **How important are each of the following factors in relation to the lack of alertness among children?**

	Not Important	Mildly Important	Moderately Important	Extremely Important
Not enough sleep	1	2	3	4
Improper nutrition	1	2	3	4
Depression	1	2	3	4
Illness	1	2	3	4

13. **To what degree do you think the following items would help to solve the problem of childrens' lack of alertness?**

	None	Very Little	Moderate	Very Much
More consistency between parents and teachers	1	2	3	4
Education program for parents on the appropriate length of time for television and movie viewing by the children	1	2	3	4
Education program for parents on proper nutrition	1	2	3	4

14. **What other suggestions do you have for lessening the lack of alertness problem?**_____

_____

Thanks for your help!

APPENDIX C

Parent Survey

Parent Survey

This survey is part of a project for my graduate school studies. Please answer the questions by placing an X beside the answer you have chosen. Select one, or answer by filling in the blanks. Your responses will be confidential and you will not be identified.

1. I am a mother ( )
   father ( )

2. I am aged 19 or younger ( )
   20 - 25 ( )
   26 - 30 ( )
   31 - 35 ( )
   36 - 40 ( )
   41 or older ( )

3. Our total family income is less than $20,000. ( )
   $20,000 - 30,000. ( )
   over $30,000. ( )

4. I have a ( ) boy ( ) girl in the Stepping Stones program.

5. My child lives with ( ) one parent
   ( ) two parents

6. I work outside the home ( ) full time
   ( ) part time
   ( ) not at all

7. If the child lives with two parents, does the 2nd parent work outside the home? ( ) full time
   ( ) part time
   ( ) not at all

8. I work ( ) day shift
   ( ) evenings
   ( ) nights

9. What hours? _____

10. My child is in the care of a babysitter or day care _____hours per day.

11. During the school week my child goes to sleep at _____p.m. and gets up at _____a.m.

12. How important is adequate sleep?

1	2	3	4
Not Important	Mildly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important

13. On weekends my child goes to sleep at _____p.m. and gets up at ____a.m.

14. My child spends most of his/her after school hours.
(Choose one) ( ) playing outside ( ) playing with toys
( ) watching T.V. ( ) playing with others

15. What are your child's favorite toys? _____

16. What are your child's favorite T.V. shows? _____
_____

17. How many hours per day does your child watch T.V.?_____

18. What are your child's favorite movies?_____
_____

19. Who decides what T.V. programs will be watched? _____

20. Are there any T.V. programs you don't let your child watch?_____

21. Who decides what movies will be watched? _____

22. Are there any movies you don't let your child watch? _____

23. How big of an impact do you think T.V. has on aggressive behavior?

(Choose one)	1	2	3	4
	none	not much	some	a great deal

1. Would you be interested to learn more about television and movies and their influences (good and bad), on your child? yes ( ) no ( )

2. Would you be interested in participating in a Family Video Lending Library Program if there was no cost to you? yes ( ) no ( )

APPENDIX D

Calendar Plan for Implementation Activities

Appendix D

Calendar Plan for Implementation Activities

Weeks One, Two, and Three

Visit all families to invite them to the program. Check to be sure that all parent surveys are completed and returned. Explain that only those who attend will be eligible to participate in the lending library program. Schedule the library and select menues for the meals. Meet with others concerning the proposed content of the program. Contact area businesses to secure funding. Check video lists for appropriate video purchases. Establish check-out and return procedures and storage arrangements. Send reminder about upcoming meeting. Monitor lack of alertness and aggression in students.

Week Four

Continue to monitor aggression and lack of alertness in students. Purchase videos, rebox them and organize them alphabetically. Session One of the education program is delivered.

Evening agenda

6:30 - 6:30 Dinner

6:30 - 8:00 Children go to the classroom for a movie and play.

6:30 - 8:00 Parents meet in the library. Welcome, Introduction to the Program, Review of Parent Survey Results, T.V. Knowledge Survey (Pre-test), Snippets of popular shows mentioned in surveys, Discussion, Suggestions, Closure.

Week Five

Continue to monitor student behavior. Monitor video usage.

Session three of the education program.

Evening Agenda

6:00 - 6:30 Dinner

6:30 - 8:00 Children go to the classroom for a movie and play.

6:30 - 8:00 Parents meet in the library. Review of family viewing diaries. Introduce topic - Five Basic Things Your Child Should Know About T.V. (Appendix J) Review check-out procedures. Handouts. Discussion, Suggestions, Closure.

Week Seven

Continue to monitor aggression and lack of alertness in students. Monitor video usage.

Session Four of the education program.

Evening agenda

6:00 - 6:30 Dinner

6:30 - 8:00 Children go to the classroom for a movie and play.

6:30 - 8:00 Parents meet in the library. Introduce topic - Setting standards for violence and other questionable content. Give and discuss T.V. Violence Quiz (Appendix G). Review check-out procedures. Discussion, suggestions, closure.

Week Eight

Continue to monitor aggression and lack of alertness in students. Monitor video usage. Session Five of the education program.

Evening agenda

6:00 - 6:30 Dinner

6:30 - 8:00 Children go to the classroom for a movie and play.

6:30 - 8:00 Parents meet in the library. Introduce topic - How commercials target the child market. Video - Buy Me That: A Kid's Survival Guide to T.V. Advertising (30 min.) Discussion, suggestions, closure.

Week Nine

Collect data from student behavior forms and analyze. Monitor video lending library usage. Session six of the education program.

Evening agenda

6:00 - 6:30 Dinner

6:30 - 8:00 Children go to the classroom for a movie and play.

6:30 - 8:00 Parents meet in the library. Introduce topic - Making Informed Choices. Age Appropriate Handouts - Maryland Campaign for Kid's T.V. (Appendix K). T.V. Knowledge Survey (Post-test) Discussion, suggestions, closure.

Week Ten

Survey children again and note any differences in responses from nine weeks ago. Monitor video lending library usage. Session seven of the education program

Evening Agenda

6:00 - 6:30 Dinner

6:30 - 8:00 Children go to the classroom for a movie and play.

6:30 - 8:00 Parents meet in the library. Wrap-up with Alternatives to T.V. and introduce the local children's librarian to share programs and video services there. Handout (Appendix L). Share results of Post-tests. Discussion, suggestions, closure.

APPENDIX E

Stay Tuned!

Appendix E

Stay Tuned !

We have a great evening of food and fun planned for you and your family. Please join us for pizza, drinks, and a family movie for your children. We'll be sharing the latest information with you about how you can make good choices about what your children should and should not see on T.V. and video.

Where: Frederick Douglass
Elementary School Library

When: Tuesday, May 9, 1995
6:00 P.M.

Please respond by Monday, May 8th with the number who will attend so we have enough pizza and popcorn!

- - - -

APPENDIX F

T.V. Knowledge Survey

Appendix F

T.V. Knowledge Survey

		True	False
1.	During prime time, there are about 5 violent acts per hour.	X	____
2.	Most children spend almost as much time watching T.V. as they do in school.	____	X (more)
3.	The average Kindergartner has watched 5,000 hours of T.V.	X	____
4.	The level of violence in Children's Saturday morning programming is about 32 acts per hour.	X	____
5.	Preschoolers require 8 hours of sleep each night.	____	X (more)
6.	The average child sees 2,000 T. V. commercials in one year.	____	X (20,000)
7.	Children who watch a large number of aggressive programs also tend to favor the use of aggression to resolve conflicts.	X	____
8.	T.V. can be a very beneficial tool.	X	____
9.	"PG" stands for "pretty good" for kids	____	X (Parental Guidance suggested)
10.	Preschool children easily separate fact from fantasy.	____	X

APPENDIX G

A T.V. Violence Quiz for Parents

Appendix G

A T.V. Violence Quiz for Parents

		Me-as-a child	My Child	Same
1.	Who watches more T.V.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2.	Who sees more acts of violence	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3.	Who watches more violent shows?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4.	Who sees more realistic violence?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5.	Who sees more programs in which the heroes use violence to solve conflicts?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6.	Who is more likely to watch T.V. without an adult in the room?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7.	Who is more likely to play with toys based on characters seen on violent T.V. shows?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

APPENDIX H

Daily Schedule

Appendix H

Student	9-9:30	9:30-10	10-10:30	10:30-11	11-11:30	11:30-12	12-12:30	12:30-1	1-1:30
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									

Key - VA - Verbal Aggression
PA - Physical Aggression
I - Inattention

APPENDIX I

Video Lending Library

Appendix I

Video Lending Library

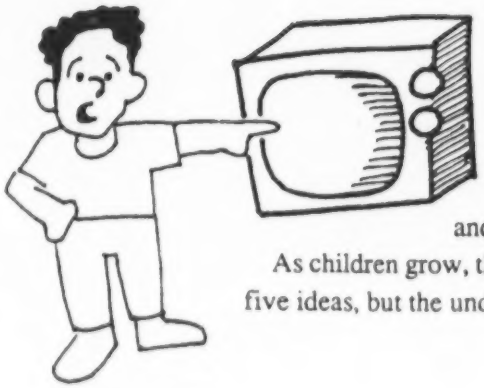
Title	Rating	Running Time
Angels in the Outfield	PG	103 minutes
Beethoven's 2nd	PG	89
Benji	G	87
The Beverly Hillbillies	PG	93
Black Beauty	G	88
The Boy Who Could Fly	PG	114
Chitty Chitty Bang Bang	G	147
Cool Runnings	PG	98
E.T.	PG	115
The Flintstones	PG	91
Geo Kids	NR	33
The Incredible Journey	G	80
Iron Will	PG	109
The Jungle Book	PG	111
The Lion King	G	88
The Little Giants	PG	106
The Little Rascals	PG	83
The Man from Snowy River	PG	104
Mickey and the Beanstalk	NR	29
The Mighty Ducks	PG	104
The Muppet Movie	G	95
Old Yeller	G	84
Once Upon a Forest	G	71
The Pagemaster	G	76
The Polar Bear King	PG	87
Pollyanna	G	134
The Secret of N.I.M.H.	G	84
The Secret Garden	G	102
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs	G	84
Sounder	G	105
Swinging Safari	NR	44
The Swiss Family Robinson	G	126
Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea	G	127
Willow	PG	130
Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory	G	100

APPENDIX J

Five Important Ideas to Teach Your Kids About T.V.

#2 FIVE IMPORTANT IDEAS

Five Important Ideas to Teach Your Kids About TV

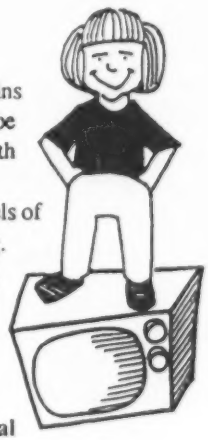


Everybody tells you to "watch TV with your kids." "Talk to your kids about what they see." But what do you look for? What do you say? Where do you start?

The following five points give you a foundation for helping your children become more aware of how television works and what role it plays in our own lives and in our modern world. This is called media literacy.

As children grow, they will be able to understand more and more about these five ideas, but the underlying principles are always the same.

1. We Help Create TV As We Watch It.

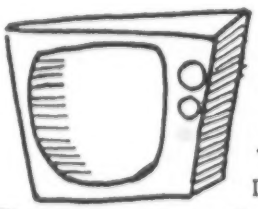


This fundamental principle turns the tables on the common assumption that TV just entertains us and all we do is watch it. Actually we are very active as we watch. Our bodies may not be moving but in our heads, we're trying to connect what we're seeing on the screen with everything else we know.

And each of us, whether adult or child, gets involved in TV programs with different levels of understanding because of who we are and what life experiences we bring to our TV viewing.

Thus we can filter and change what TV presents by *the way we watch it*. We can question, challenge and contradict — or support and reinforce — what we see and hear. It's especially important to talk back to TV (as well as cable and video) in front of children. If you don't say anything, they'll assume what they're seeing and hearing must be ok with you.

The other four ideas help us filter and change our media use by reminding us of several important ideas to remember *as we watch*



2. TV's World Is Made Up.

We all know that nothing on TV — whether cartoons or movies or commercials — is "real." But even adults still fall for the images and illusions that TV creates. Think, for example, how "perfect" everything looks on TV. Do flowers ever fade? Do clothes wrinkle? Does cereal get soggy? Maybe that's because in the TV studio, the "milk" is really white glue.

Media-makers are our modern-day storytellers. Even a news program is "constructed" by very talented photographers, writers and editors who select certain pictures and reject others. Like you, they are sometimes fair, sometimes tired, sometimes brilliant. And like every good storyteller, they have all kinds of ways to keep their audience interested and involved. How do they do this?

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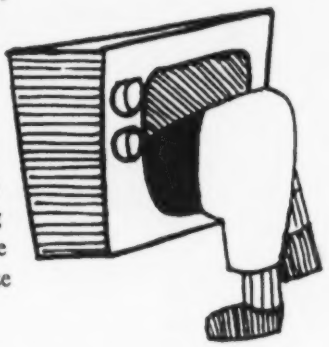
3. TV Makers Use Identifiable Techniques.



We can take apart the world that media makers construct by identifying the camera angles, music, special effects and symbols that make scary scenes more scary, tyrants more evil, or advertised products more alluring.

Without knowing it, children pick up on these techniques very early. Kids who make their own videos, for example, instinctively use close-ups or fade-outs to imitate TV. Yet they do not always realize how they are manipulated by the power of these techniques when they are watching TV. Counting laughtracks in a sitcom or the number of times the music changes in a favorite video are revealing ways to de-mystify TV, enhance appreciation of these techniques and help your child be less susceptible to manipulation.

Another way to identify how media construct a world that's not completely "real" is to ask certain questions of the media. The final two ideas suggest important questions we can ask:

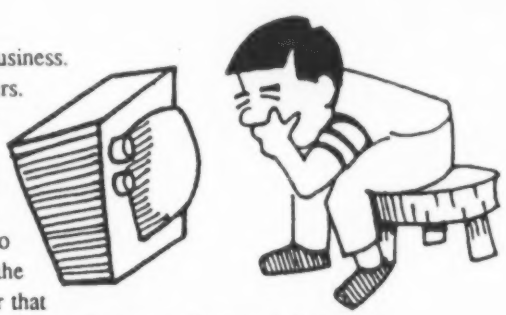
4. TV Teaches Us that Some People and Ideas Are More Important than Others.

All media carry subtle messages about who and what is important. Some people are typically cast as victims; others get to be heroes and heroines. Some characters are glamorized; others are treated with contempt. Some ideas always get headlines; others get left out completely.

Nothing we read or see in the media, even in the news, can ever be completely "objective." Sometimes, like us, media makers use stereotypes carelessly. We should expect them, however, to strive for fairness and *balance* between various ideas and viewpoints.

In the U.S., the First Amendment protects the freedom to express diverse points of view. At the same time, less popular or new ideas can have a hard time getting aired, especially if they challenge long-standing assumptions or commonly-accepted beliefs. To uncover these underlying viewpoints in the media, ask *"Who benefits?"* or *"Who loses?" Who benefits* from the way older persons are portrayed in this sitcom? *Who loses* when a news show only interviews white persons?" Answering this question helps us teach our children to think critically about what they see and hear. That's important for citizenship in a democratic society.

5. TV Is In Business to Make Money.



In the U.S. and increasingly around the world, media are big business. Producers sell programs to networks. Networks sell time to advertisers. Advertisers sell products to viewers. And the viewers are sold too! You've heard the phrase: "This program is brought to you by your sponsor." Not really. *You* are brought to the sponsor by the program.

It's important to teach our kids (and remind ourselves) that commercial television is not "free" entertainment. Its primary purpose is to sell viewers to advertisers. We "pay" for TV by increased prices on the things we buy. But advertising doesn't just invite us to buy this or that product, it teaches us *to buy*, period. And to feel dissatisfied unless we have the newest, the latest, the best.

A useful question to ask is *"Who's making money* from the news tonight? Or *who's making money* from this sporting event? The point is not that making money is wrong but that almost everything we see and hear on TV is subject to influence by a profit motive.

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APPENDIX K

Just For .....

Appendix K

JUST FOR PRESCHOOLERS (AGES 2-5)

"It scares me that my young child can be so mesmerized by television that she really doesn't hear me talking to her."

- Prince George's County Parent

PRESCHOOLERS AND TELEVISION

Ask almost any two-year old and they'll happily show you where the TV is in their house. And don't be surprised if they already have a favorite show.

Television is an influence in our children's lives from the start. It seems as soon as they begin to watch, they're hooked.

PUBLIC TELEVISION IS ONLY PART OF THE ANSWER

Fortunately for parents, there is good television for this age group on public and cable stations. . . plus a wealth of videotapes to rent, buy or borrow. But by the time they are 4 or 5, kids are exposed to and ready for the cartoons (and the products sold) on commercial television, too.

Even if your children aren't watching commercial TV at home, they may see the shows or the toys at a friend's house or hear about them from preschool pals. And if they have older siblings, they may be exposed to all sorts of commercial shows at a much earlier age.

THE ELECTRONIC "BABY SITTER"

If we're honest about it, most parents will admit to using videotapes or television to occupy their preschooler for some time each day. It's not surprising because preschoolers demand more time and energy for more hours of the day than any other age group.

The television helps many parents by providing a distraction so that meals may be prepared, bills paid or phone calls returned. A television show that a young child will watch intently for a few minutes gives you a relatively safe place for them to be while you get things done.

There's nothing wrong with that, if you know what they are watching (and you've watched it with them) and you take time to set limits and help them learn about TV.

When You Watch TV With Your Preschooler. . .

- Let him know that television is "pretend;" that TV shows tell stories (just like books) and someone made them up for you to watch.
- Watch cartoons carefully and point out when "real life" won't work that way. . . like dropping an anvil on a person's head.
- Ask your child to solve TV problems without violence.

Make TV Fun (and Build Preschool Skills)

- Watch a favorite show and have your child retell the story with her own ending.
- Count commercials. . . practice writing the numbers as you go.
- Use an egg timer or stop-watch to time commercials. . . watch the clock to see what time shows begin and end.
- Spot junk food and healthy food on television. . . talk about good nutrition.

More Things to Think About

- Start with "your rules" but as your child gets older have him help make rules, too.
- Pay attention to what your preschooler watches with you (or a sitter). . . soap operas, the news talk shows. You may need rules for a sitter and yourself!
- Collect fun things to do and put them in a "Quiet Box" to offer (instead of TV) when you need a few minutes of quiet. Include crayons, puzzles, stickers, paper, etc.
- Build a videotape library. . . borrow them from friends, record good programs from television. . . ask that gifts be tapes rather than toys.

Appendix K

JUST FOR SCHOOL-AGED KIDS (AGES 6-11)

"I don't like my children to watch cartoons... they become so passive... they just sit and stare... and I hate the violence."

- Baltimore City Parent

SCHOOL-AGED KIDS AND TELEVISION

School-aged kids are in a kind of television limbo -- there is very little good programming made especially for them. Most kids in this age group are watching shows too simple or too sophisticated for them. Yet, by some estimates, this group of kids watches the most television... especially cartoons and sitcoms.

Advertisers have a field day with school-aged kids, too. With each show comes a new line of dolls, games, toys or action figures... and a video game, too.

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO START GOOD HABITS

Kids, at this age, are hungry for information about the way the world works and still like doing hands-on activities to learn. This combination of interests opens the door for lots of creative ways to teach them about TV.

And with the growing independence of this group comes more choices... and less interest in their parents as entertainment. Cultivating a hobby or special interest at this age will give your child an appealing alternative to TV.

When You Watch TV With Your Child...

- Ask your child to compare what she's seen on TV with people, places and events she's read about or talked about in school.
- Talk about how realistic a show's plot or characters may be. Do they seem like they could be real or not?
- Point out make-believe from the reality -- some children in this age group still have trouble sorting it out for themselves.

When You Watch TV with Your Child. . . (Cont'd.)

- Talk about stereotypes you may see. . . television often presents its own reality.
- Point out times when a TV character behaves in a way that is not consistent with your values.
- Pick television shows the same way you would a movie (be an advocate for a rating system, too).
- Find non-violent solution to TV problems.
- Discuss these things during commercials. . . you won't be interrupting the show and your kids will have less time to be "sold."

Use Television to Learn

- Ask your child to draw a picture or write a short report about a show he's seen.
- Make your own TV "guide". . . listing only the shows you will be watching that week.
- Show your child that cartoons also are found in comic books and in newspapers.
- Get a book about TV production techniques. Learning about how TV is made takes much of the power and glamour out of it.
- Issue tickets or tokens for TV time each week. Have your child earn them for good behavior or chores. She can even make the tickets as an activity.
- Look at TV products and/or toys on regular shopping trips, to see whether the claims are realistic. Toys or food advertised on TV are rarely as exciting close-up.
- Help your child write letters to television stations or to TV people to let them know what kind of job they're doing.

JUST FOR YOUNG TEENS (AGES 12-16)

"The sex and violence add to a general loss of innocence way too soon. . . that distresses me."

- Frederick County Parent

". . . and even when you find a program with value, it may be full of commercials sending the wrong messages about sexual behavior and consumption."

- Prince George's County Parent

TELEVISION AND YOUR TEENAGER

Television can offer you and your teenager a springboard for discussing important issues and events. It's not always easy to bring up such topics out of the blue but, once the door is opened by a TV character. . . it's fair game.

You also may find that TV gives you a way to encourage reading or further study for your teen around topics of interest. And you can teach your teenager how to be her own advocate on important issues.

Teenagers may resent the interference in their viewing choices and -- as with many other things -- give you a hard time about rules and limits. As much as you can, let <u>them</u> make the choices with your help.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Be sure that you choose your times wisely to discuss issues you've seen on television. During the show may not be a good time. . . or when her friends are over. . . or when you're arguing about something else. Be careful to pick a time when you're both ready to talk. Try to find some good in her choices, even when you disagree.

If you choose the wrong time to discuss that smirk or knowing laugh he gave to some sexual message on TV, for example, you may lose the chance to talk about it. Better to bring it up later (or during the commercial) than to embarrass him when it happens.

More than ever, there are critical societal issues that we <u>have</u> to talk about with our children. Parents can use all the help they can get. And, here, television can be an ally.

When You Watch TV with Your Teenager. . .

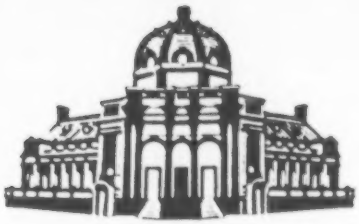
- Ask his opinion. Find out what he's thinking about what he sees.
- Use the opportunity to discuss issues you see on TV.
- Relate TV to the real world. Television reduces very complicated issues/situations to simple solutions. . . it can leave a teen feeling frustrated about his own ability to solve problems.
- Talk about advertising techniques and production techniques. Teens can go beyond product claims and really analyze what advertisers and shows are trying to sell.

Ways Your Teenager Can Relate to TV

- Keep an atlas by the TV and using it to read about places in the news.
- Read the book before watching a movie on TV and compare the two.
- Use books to expand topics introduced by television.
- Borrow or rent a video camera to "play" with camera angles and learn about TV photography.
- Write an original TV script or rewrite one that already aired.
- Watch the TV news, then read your local newspaper to compare the way stories are presented by each.
- Express opinions about television programming by writing letters to local and national executives.
- Become politically active through television. Write letters to elected officials and organizations based on TV news coverage.

APPENDIX L

Handley Regional Library



Handley Regional Library

A Public Library Serving

Winchester, Frederick County & Clarke County

Videos for Young Children
A Selected List

Video Books
Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are? by Dr. Seuss
Perfect the Pig & Ty's One-Man Band (Reading Rainbow)
The Ugly Duckling narrated by Cher (Looking Glass Video)
Yertle the Turtle by Dr. Seuss

Physical Fitness
The Swamp Stomp starring J.D. Roth (Fun House Fitness)
Toe Belly Up Belly with Jack Leonard

Information Videos
Big Bird in Japan
Don't Eat the Pictures: Sesame Street at the Metropolitan Museum of Art
Fire & Rescue
Forest Animals (See How They Grow)
My First Cooking Video: a Kids' Guide to Making Fun Things to Eat
My First Nature Video: a Kids' Guide to Exciting Nature Activities
Road Construction Ahead
Up With Phonics: Short and Long Vowel Sounds
Whitetail Deer: Their Real World (Wildlife Family Entertainment)

General
Everyone Is Special (Barney & Friends)
James Goes Buzz Buzz & Other Thomas Stories (Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends)
Maurice Sendak's Really Rosie (Children's Circle Videos)
The Princess Who Had Never Laughed (Faerie Tale Theatre)
Science Rock (School House Rock)
Spanish/English: Music Video (Lyric Language)
There Goes a Spaceship

Musical Videos
A Day at Camp (Kidsongs)
A Day With the Animals (Kidsongs)
Ella Jenkins Live!: at the Smithsonian
Joe Scruggs in Concert
The Orchestra performed by the Toronto Philharmonic Orchestra
Sing-Along Earth Songs

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